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A

CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

IN THE

THIRD PARISH OF DEDHAM,

JANUARY 17th, 1836.

BY JOHN WHITE,
MINISTER OF SAID SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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PRINTED BY H. MANN.
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The following discourse was prepared for the 10*th of January; but the delivery of it was necessarily deferred until the next Lord's day.*

DISCOURSE.

That the generation to come might know them, even the children, which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. Ps. LXXVIII. 6—7.

I have been induced, my friends, to take notice of the present occasion not merely for private gratification, but because it is profitable for us at certain periods of time to pause and reflect upon the lapse of years and the series of events, which have marked their passage. I was ready also to believe, that they, especially, who trace their origin to the first settlers within the limits of this parish, or to the inhabitants, who a hundred years ago, took an active part in procuring its incorporation, would consider it deserving of particular regard. It will occur to you without doubt, that in searching the records of former days, many facts are brought to light, which would not form a proper subject for our present consideration, and that there is no small difficulty in making such a selection from them, as is appropriate to this time and place. Nor can I, in accomplishing my purpose, avoid repeating some facts, which have already been published. Without further introduction, I would beg your candor and indulgence while I present such facts and considerations, as seem deserving of notice, and proper to be introduced in the services of the sanctuary, allowing, however, a little more

latitude, than is usual, in a common address from the pulpit.

Who was the earliest inhabitant or what family was first established in this part of Dedham, I have not been able precisely to learn, nor have I been particularly anxious to ascertain that fact, as my design is to confine myself in the following remarks chiefly within the limits of a century. It may not however be improper to take notice of some circumstances, which occurred previously to our existence, as a distinct church and corporation, and which led to a final separation from the 'Old Parish.'

Land was set off to certain individuals, probably, long before any settlements were made within the borders of what is now called the third parish. For as early, as 1640* a grant was made to Rev. John Allin, the first pastor of the first church in Dedham, of land in Rock Meadow bordering south upon Francis Chickering and Thomas Wight, and in addition to this 120 acres of upland abutting upon the waste. The land granted to Mr. Allin was probably that now included in the farms of Messrs. Thacher and Isaacus Colburn, or in that vicinity. Several acres upon 'Pond Plain' were granted to Nathaniel Colburn as early as 1663, and in 1694 a portion of land at 'Fox-hill' was set off to Joseph Ellis. The names Pond Plain and Fox Hill were, therefore, in early use.

The name by which this parish is designated, generally, and in the act of incorporation, I find in the records, as far back, as 1674, and from its connexion it appears to have been a familiar term of distinction at that time. But although the whole of the parish according to the form of law is denominated 'the Clapboardtrees,' it is hardly necessary here to mention, that the name is appropriated by the inhabitants to the elevation, on which the

*See Town Records.

meeting house now stands and the portion of the parish lying east of it. It undoubtedly derives its origin from the circumstance, that in this section of the town of Dedham there grew a certain species of timber, of a texture well adapted to furnish materials of an excellent quality for the covering of dwelling houses. Some of you recollect the lofty oaks, which once crowned the summit of the hill, and attracted the attention of the distant traveller, but like many of those, who may have reposed under their shade, have now disappeared. From an early record, I infer, that it was a special privilege granted by the authority of the town to use clapboards, as a covering for buildings.*

The inhabitants of our territory were for a long time few in number. The soil being rugged wore a forbidding aspect, and emigrants were disposed to select one yielding more readily to the plough. On this account the progress of the settlement was slow, nor did the settlers consider themselves competent to maintain a separate existence, as a parish, until several years after the commencement of the last century. Symptoms of a disposition to separate, appear in the record of a town meeting in May, 1717, at which time the town voted to free from paying 'head money' as it is termed, to the Rev. Mr. Belcher, persons living near the 'Old Saw Mill,† and those who were at the distance of five miles, if they gave satisfactory evidence of having paid this money, where they constantly wor-

*The following in the town records is under date of Dec. 31st, 1636. "Whereas many of our company have come up to inhabit this winter at our town of Dedham, so that other materials are not well to be had for the closeing in of their houses in such a season, which thing being well taken into consideration, we doe therefore give liberty only for every such inhabitant abovesayd to make use of clapboards to any part of his house for his present necessity from this present daye untill ye first daye of the third month next, called May daye, and not afterwards, that so the order in that behalf made may stand still in force and effect to all intents and purposes, for which it was formed accordingly." March 1638.—At a meeting of the town, "The clapboarding of houses is set at liberty unto all men from this time forward."

†The "Old Saw Mill" stood where a saw mill now stands, not far from the house of Messrs. Richard and Willard Ellis.

shipped. In March, 1721, a petition was presented by the inhabitants of the southerly part of the town near the 'Old Saw Mill' to be freed from paying the minister in the town, that they might have preaching among themselves; which petition was not granted.

In the same year, in the month of May, the town received a petition from the same inhabitants to set them off to be a distinct township. This petition was also rejected. The subject was in agitation several years and several attempts were made in the town, but without success, to fix upon a spot for a meeting house where all the people might be accommodated.* At length in May, 1728, money was granted by the town to support preaching in the southerly part, and in September of the same year, the town granted the petition of the southerly part 'to be set off as a separate township,' as the records express it, if the westerly part of Stoughton would join with them. After this, in March 1728, a petition of the westerly part for a precinct was granted, and a division was at length agreed upon, embracing the present south and west parishes of this town with the westerly part of Stoughton.

A petition having been presented to the General Court to confirm the proceedings of the town, it was granted, and a parish within the above-mentioned limits was duly set off Oct. 8th, 1730.†

The union of the South and West portions of the town was not of long continuance. Their relative situation presented insuperable obstacles to its permanency. There were difficulties attending the selection of a suitable place for a house of worship.

*See Town Records of that period.

†In this act of the General Court the term "township" is used, but in a subsequent order relating to the choice of officers, it is recognized as a precinct.

At a meeting called in May 1731, it was voted that the Precinct 'hold a loving and friendly conference together.' The matter was afterward referred to the General Court, and a committee was raised by that body to view the whole ground, and determine upon a situation, which would best accommodate the inhabitants. It is unnecessary, however, to give a minute account of the various projects for producing unanimity. They all at length terminated in a division of the parish and the northerly part, or what is now the West Parish was again connected with the first or 'Old Precinct.' A petition to the General Court relating to this separation is dated Jan. 23d, 1733. By this arrangement, however, the inhabitants of this section of the town were not accommodated in respect to a place of worship. Several communicants living in this vicinity were desirous of forming a distinct church, and expressed by letter their desire to the first church, with which they were connected. This letter was signed by eight of the brethren. But they did not obtain a vote of compliance. At what time precisely, a separate religious service was here performed, I am not able to say; but in May, 1735, it appears, that decisive measures were adopted for embodying a new church, independently of the first church, and installing the Rev. Josiah Dwight, as the pastor. Accordingly on the 4th of June 1735, a church was organized and Mr. Dwight was installed. On this occasion according to the records of Rev. Mr. Dexter the fourth minister of the first parish in this town, there were five churches represented by their pastors and delegates, viz. those of Medfield, of Brookline, of Hingham, of Milton and Natick. The first church in Dedham was invited, but did not accept the invitation. Four new members being at this time added to the church, the whole number including Mr. Dwight was 13. Their

names are attached to the first covenant. This was called the second church, as the south parish had none connected with it at that time.

The land, on which the first meeting house* stood was given by Mr. Joseph Ellis, who was proprietor of the farm now owned and improved by his great grandson.† The deed of gift is dated May 21st 1731, and acknowledged Sept. 15, 1735. At the time of Mr. Dwight's installation, the meeting house was in an unfinished state, and the worshippers were subject to many inconveniences, to which we are strangers. They were not accommodated with plastered walls, and few or none of them with pews. Individuals however, had the privilege of building pews for themselves, the first choice of a situation being given to the person who paid the highest rate. In the first list of rateable polls in the parish, the names of 43 individuals are recorded.‡ A majority of these names is still found within our limits, and a large proportion of the present inhabitants derive their origin from the first proprietors.

Some indeed dwell in the same houses, or parts of them. The east part of that, in which Mr. Seth Gay now lives was purchased, as tradition informs us, by the Parish for the accommodation of Mr.

*By a vote of the precinct in 1731, it appears that the frame of a meeting house stood at that time near Mr. Jonathan Onion's and Joseph Ellis', a committee having been appointed to purchase it, if it could be had on reasonable terms. This was the frame of the meeting house afterwards occupied by this parish, as a place of worship. It is said that this frame or a part of it was brought from a spot near the present dwelling house of Mr. Samuel Carpenter, where a foundation had already been laid for a house of worship.

At the "centre" near the house of Mr. Benjamin Fairbanks, a building was erected, which at a meeting in June 1732, it was proposed to *complete* for a place of worship. But the proposition was rejected. The place pointed out by the General Court's committee was on the common land lying between John Cobbs and Dr. Richards', and it was voted at several meetings to build a meeting house on that ground, but none was ever built there.

†Mr. Jason Ellis.

‡Of these, 5 bore the name of Baker, 3 of Colburn, 6 of Ellis, 5 of Gay, 2 of Richards, 2 of Pond, 2 of Dean, 2 of Fisher, 2 of Herring, 2 of Hawes; and one of Badcock, Dier, Everett, Taylor, Lewis, Pike, Macnab, Onion, Thomson, Tucker, Whittemore, Fairbanks.

Dwight their pastor, who occupied it during his ministry. One of these relics of ancient times, the house now occupied by Mr. Lemuel Gay, and originally owned by Mr. Joseph Smith, as I am told, was used as a place of worship by the first members of the Episcopal church in this town, who in consequence of a petition presented March 18th, 1734, had part of the tax payable to the pastor of the first church remitted.* According to information received from an aged individual in this place, there are 12 houses or parts of houses now improved, which were built previously to the incorporation of the parish.†

We look with a sort of veneration upon these ancient abodes of the men and women of a generation long since past away. They remind us of the firmness and vigor and determined spirit, which were characteristic of their occupants. They have stood through the storms and sunshine of more than a hundred annual revolutions. The present strength of their frames makes us almost ready to believe, that they may endure through another century. Their sturdy oaken beams seem to defy the tooth of time, compared with which, our modern structures are like the 'vapor, which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.'

After a church was organized and a minister installed, measures were adopted to form a separate parish, which met with opposition. But on the 10th of Jan. 1736 an act was passed incorporating this, as a distinct parish.

The moderator of the first parish meeting on record, was Lt. John Baker. The first parish Clerk was Joseph Richards, Esq., who was continued in this office until the year 1756. He was a man of distinction, honored in public and private

*See First Parish Records.

† In the present dwelling house of Mr. Royal and Hon. William Ellis, meetings were held for religious worship previously to the time of Mr. Dwight's settlement.

life. Besides being a medical practitioner, the only one that ever resided in the parish until the year 1814, when the present physician established himself here, he filled many important and responsible stations with high reputation. He deceased in the year 1760. His successor in the office of Parish Clerk was Mr. Isaac Whiting, who was elected to the same ten years successively. Mr. Whiting was often employed by the town in the direction of its municipal concerns.*

The first two Deacons in the Church were Jonathan Onion and Joseph Ellis, both highly respected and possessing influence. The former died in 1758 at the age of 72. The house, in which he lived is said to have been the first house built in the district of the parish properly called Clapboard-trees, and stood nearly opposite the house purchased by the parish for Mr. Dwight. Dea. Ellis died in the year 1783, aged 87.†

Of the ministry of Mr. Dwight no notices are left by himself. From other sources we learn that he was a native of this town, of a most respectable family, a son of Timothy and Anne Dwight, born Feb. 7, 1670.‡ He was educated at Harvard University and received the honors of that institution in 1687; commenced the work of the ministry in Woodstock, Conn. in 1690, and was dismissed in 1726. There are traditions relating to his ministry, upon most of which we cannot implicitly rely, nor are they worthy of notice in this place. From

*The following gentlemen, besides those above mentioned, have held the office of Parish Clerk—Dea. Ichabod Gay, 27 years—Nathaniel Kingsbury, Esq., 5 do—Mr. Benjamin Fairbanks, 3 do—Ebenezer Fisher, Esq., 2 do—Mr. Nathaniel Whiting, 2 do—Dea. George Ellis the present Parish Clerk, 31 do.

†Dea. Ellis obtained license "to keep tavern" July 28, 1732. The house which he opened for the accommodation of travellers contained one room on the lower floor and one chamber only, forming a striking contrast with the public house now kept on the same spot by his grandson, Col. Abner Ellis,—and with the Inns generally of the present day.

‡A grandson of Mr. Dwight, Capt. Jeremiah Baker, is still living in the parish.

notes made by my immediate predecessor I will however, offer a short extract: 'Mr. Dwight was supposed by his cotemporaries to be a man of good natural abilities and considerable acquirements in ancient learning. He was well versed in Old School Divinity, and was respected by the more enlightened, as a scholar and a gentleman. Though a man of piety and virtue, he was singular in his manners. His peculiarities increased in his old age.' These and other causes producing dissatisfaction, the pastor requested a dismission, which was granted on the 20th May, 1743. The terms of his dismission were that he should receive from the parish 'a generous grant of 50*l.* and that a number of respectable individuals should on his removal accompany him, as far as Thomson.' After his dismission he returned to Woodstock, where he spent the remainder of his days.

The parish did not long remain destitute of a pastor. On the 5th of Oct. 1743, Mr. Andrew Tyler received an invitation to become the minister of this church and society. Having accepted the terms proposed, Mr. Tyler was ordained in Nov. 1743. The records do not inform us precisely on what day of the month the ordination took place. But it is stated in Mr. Tyler's notice of the services of the occasion, that on the same day he was admitted into this church by a letter of recommendation from the church in Brattle-street, Boston. This letter is dated Nov. 27th, 1743. It could not, therefore, have been prior to that time.*

The prospects of the pastor and his flock were flattering. Mr. Tyler was a man of handsome personal appearance, of polite and engaging manners and graceful address, highly "gifted in pray-

*The churches in Brattle-st. Boston, in Medfield, in Natick, in Milton, in Hingham, the 1st church in Dedham and the 2d in Roxbury, were invited to assist in the ceremony. Rev. Dr. Gay of Hingham began with prayer. Rev. Mr. Cooper of Boston preached from Rev. VI. 2.—Rev. Mr. Baxter of Medfield gave the charge—Rev. Mr. Dexter, of Dedham, the right hand of fellowship.

er,'' and through many years held in good repute, as a preacher. His religious opinions corresponded, I believe, with the prevailing sentiments of the age. Being a man of quick sensibility, his passions, easily excited, were unfortunately the means of bringing a cloud over the latter portion of his ministry. Serious difficulties arose from apparently trifling causes in about twenty years after the commencement of his pastoral connexion. These increased till in the year 1769 measures were adopted to procure his removal, which after much negociation, many ecclesiastical councils, and at length the appointment of referees, led to his dismission on the 17th of Dec. 1772. Mr. Tyler was married in 1745 to Miss Mary Richards of this place. Of his family I have very imperfect knowledge. One of his nine sons, Joseph, formerly represented in the General Court of Massachusetts the town, where he lives in the present state of Maine. Having left the ministry, he resided in Boston, his native place, until his decease in 1775.

In a review of the stormy period just noticed we can hardly avoid comparing the spirit, which then manifested itself, with that of the present time.

Disputes often arose between individuals of the same church, and between pastors and their churches, which occasioned the calling of ecclesiastical councils; so that many churches and societies were kept in an almost continual state of warfare. And while we regret that in the history of this church and society, we find evidence of a spirit of dissension, we may by reference to the general ecclesiastical history of that period, discover proofs sufficiently strong that they were not alone—that it was the common fault of the age. We are also struck with the inadequacy of the means then commonly used to quench the coals of strife—means, which served rather to enliven and give new intensity to the flame,—setting members of a church and

society in hostile array against each other and opening new sources of enmity instead of effecting a reconciliation. The inference is, that church discipline should be administered and church censures dealt with a sparing hand—that ecclesiastical councils should seldom be resorted to for the purpose of settling disputes between different lay-members of a church, or between a pastor and his flock. Crimination commonly makes room for recrimination; it is a good rule, therefore, to exercise forbearance, and not be easily provoked; and in the event of a misunderstanding, it is most consistent with the christian character either to separate or to make mutual concessions. The day, we trust, has passed by as respects some portions at least of the Christian community, when every offensive word and every supposed error in doctrine must be made an occasion for complaint before an ecclesiastical public body. We know of no good resulting from frequent reference to ecclesiastical tribunals in order to settle points of doctrine or reconcile contending parties.

The dismission of Mr. Tyler seemed to open a way for forming a new connexion. But the storm did not at once become a calm. The troubled waters were not immediately at rest. There was yet a rolling of the swollen waves. Several causes operated to prevent a speedy settlement. It does not appear that any money was granted by the parish for the supply of the pulpit until March 8th 1774. At a meeting of the parish held at this time, a committee was chosen to confer with the members of the South Parish on the subject of congregating together on Lord's Days three months from the succeeding April, in *their* meeting house, and in the meeting house of *this parish* alternately. It does not appear from the records, that this scheme was carried into effect. The war of the 'American Revolution' then commenced, which

increased the expenses and trials of that period in our history. Those of us, whose memories do not extend so far back as to the time of that eventful struggle, can hardly imagine the hardships accompanying a contest for deliverance from a foreign yoke. But while we read of the toils of the men of that generation, who gave a portion of their worldly substance, or exposed their lives, or shed their blood to secure their country's independence, we can bear testimony to their patriotism and valor Our own records show how great were the sacrifices made by the members of this society. Large sums were granted to bear their proportionate burden of the expenses of the war.* On this subject we can appeal to the experience of those, who shared the dangers and witnessed the struggles, to which I refer. Three of the native inhabitants, who served in the revolutionary war, are now receiving from their country a deserved though late reward in an annual pension. Another of the same class has recently come to reside among us.†

Though the circumstances of the times were unfavorable, and impeded the progress of the parish toward the settlement of a minister, yet the means of religious instruction were not wholly neglected. In the year 1779, my immediate predecessor, the Rev. Thomas Thacher, preached here as a candidate. His services being acceptable, he was invited by the church in 1779, and in February 1780 by the parish to become their pastor and religious teacher. In this transaction there was an unanimous concurrence of the parish with the church. At that time it was customary to offer to the pastor elect what was termed a settlement to encourage his acceptance of a "call." As an inducement to

*At one time 620*l.* at another 400*l.*, and at another 1200*l.* were to be levied on the polls and rateable estates in the parish.

† Capt. Lewis Colburn, Mr. Joseph Baker, and Mr. William Fairbanks.—Mr. Joseph Stone, a revolutionary pensioner, recently from Weston, now resides in the parish.

Mr. Thacher to comply with their request, the parish offered him 110*l.* for a settlement, one half to be paid in 1780, in gold and silver, or the value thereof in continental currency, as the exchange might be at the time of payment.

Mr. Thacher accepted the invitation of the church and society, and was ordained June 7th, 1780. Nine churches were invited to be present on this occasion by their respective pastors and delegates.* Mr. Thacher commenced the ministry in this place under circumstances as favorable, as the state of public affairs would permit, and with expressions indicating a disposition to share the burdens necessarily imposed by a continued war with the mother country.† In his answer of acceptance he thus addresses himself to the society: 'The offers contained in your votes of the 14th of Feb. you must be sensible, are moderate. The distresses of the country are an apology. I am far from wishing to be exempted from the sufferings of my brethren, and am as willing to share in their afflictions, as to rejoice in their prosperity.' You all know how well his life corresponded with his professions, and how faithfully he redeemed his pledge. Many are the instances on record of his personal interest in the welfare of his people in respect to their moral and religious improvement and the means of supporting religious institutions. My own acquaintance with my respected predecessor, was brief and partial. Many of you are better acquainted, than I am, with his character. It is not con-

* The churches represented were those of Dedham, of Needham, of Dover, of Medfield, Malden Milton, Billerica and the 2d church in Berwick. Rev. Mr. West of Needham offered the introductory prayer. Rev. Dr Thacher of Malden, afterwards of Boston, brother of the pastor elect, preached the sermon. Rev. Mr. Robbins of Milton gave the charge. Rev. Mr. Haven of Dedham gave the right hand of fellowship, and Rev. Mr. Cummings of Billerica offered the concluding prayer.

† The following circumstance shows how severe were the burdens above alluded to, so far as respects a depreciation of the currency. The parish in providing for the payment of one half of the settlement offered to their pastor, voted and granted the sum of 4125*l.*, and if any paid his assessment in gold or silver it was to be received at the rate of 1 to 75.

sistent with my present design to give a full sketch of his life, yet I cannot omit this opportunity to offer a few general remarks upon his qualities, as a preacher and as a man. It is obvious that his mind was of a vigorous cast, that he possessed intellectual powers far above the ordinary level. He was able to take comprehensive views and could express them in strong and clear language. He could be severe or pathetic, as occasion required. As no one could long be in his presence, so no one can peruse his writings without being convinced of his mental energy. Possessed of strong moral feeling, he could not look upon vice, but with the strongest abhorrence; and when he took the lash, he used it with no feeble strokes. He was ardent in his friendship—kind, and ready to sympathize with the distressed. Did he by any harsh or hasty expression wound any one's feelings he was ever ready to make apology to the injured. He did not think it a mark of a great mind never to confess a fault—nor did he disdain to ask pardon for the wrong he might have done. He sought the things which make for peace. Of his generosity and the benevolence of his heart you have had ample testimony, in the provisions of his will, as well as his previous donations to the society. Of the strength of his opposition to Calvinistic views of theology he has left a lasting memorial.

How high he was held in public estimation appears from numerous tokens of public favor. He was a member of the Convention which in 1778 assembled to consider the propriety of adopting the Federal Constitution. He was elected a member of the Humane Society and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences The legislature of this Commonwealth appointed him preacher on the anniversary of the General Election, 1811. He delivered a discourse before the Humane Society, and a Dudleian lecture before the University in

Cambridge. These and many others have been published, all discovering vigorous thought and abounding with just sentiment. The greater part of his ministry was peaceful. Towards its close, as the old meeting house was going to decay, some proposed to raise funds to repair it, while others were in favor of erecting a new church. A minute history of the proceedings of the parish at that time will not be expected, and it can afford no pleasure to speak of the difference of opinions, that prevailed in regard to the location of a new house. We impeach the motives of none, who were active members of the society at that period. It is sufficient to say, that after much deliberation and many attempts to secure unanimity in their operations, a majority agreed to build a house on the spot, where we are now worshipping. Some coincided with the will of the majority; others, not being satisfied with their decision, withdrew and formed a distinct society.

The work proceeded; a new house of worship was erected, and being completed on the 26th of Feb. 1809, a discourse was delivered by the pastor on taking leave of the ancient house, the first and only one, which had been occupied by the parish and consecrated to the service of Jehovah. It was an occasion, that awakened strong emotions and called up many affecting thoughts, especially in the minds of the aged. Even with the homely structure, that was about to be deserted, many interesting associations were connected, and the last prayers there offered to Heaven were not unaccompanied with melancholy sensations. The text chosen by the preacher on that occasion was a part of the conversation of the woman of Samaria with our Saviour: 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.' On the first day of March immediately succeeding, the new house was dedicated to Almighty God. The subject of the Sermon delivered at the

dedication by the pastor was taken from Zech. 1—14, 'I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.' On the latter occasion, Rev. Jabez Chickering of the South Parish offered the introductory, and Rev. Joshua Bates of the First Parish in this town, the concluding prayer. Measures, in which the pastor took an active part, were soon adopted, with success, to raise a fund, the income of which should be appropriated to the support of the ministry in this place. But Mr. Thacher did not long survive this period of his ministry. Infirmities were coming upon him. Add to these some afflictions, which to him were uncommonly severe, and might have operated to depress his spirits, by casting a shadow over his prospects. The removal by death of a brother in the ministry, the Rev. Jabez Chickering, severed one of the strongest ties, which bound him to life. Not having entered into a conjugal relation, he was more dependent on other connexions for the happiness of his days. Mr. Chickering was of nearly the same age and standing in the ministry, and in his death Mr. Thacher sustained an irreparable loss. A most melancholy accident, fatal to one of the pupils in his family, contributed likewise in no small degree to an increase of his sorrow. The disorder, which attacked him, baffled the skill of physicians and gathered strength, until the 19th of Oct. 1812, when in the fifty-sixth year of his age and thirty-third of his ministry, he was called away from the scene of his earthly labors, beloved, respected and lamented by his people. A monument was erected over his remains in the parish burying-place commemorative of his birth, his life, his death, his talents as a preacher and christian minister, and of his private virtues.*

* Rev, Mr. Thacher was born in Boston Oct. 24th, 1756, and was graduated at Harvard University in the year 1775. His father was Oxenbridge Thacher, Esq. of Boston, a man of eminence. His great grandfather was

Soon after the decease of the Rev. Mr. Thacher, the church and society unanimously invited Mr. Isaac Hurd of Charlestown to accept the office of pastor and teacher among them. To this invitation he returned a negative answer, partly, as it is stated, on account of some conscientious scruples respecting the conditions mentioned in the will of Mr. Thacher, in regard to the settlement of a successor. As it has often been said that this will, so far as it relates to the settlement of a successor, requires of him a pledge, never to preach Calvinistic or Hopkinsian doctrines, it may not be amiss here to say a word or two to correct this mistake. The conditions of the will at first view wear this complexion; but no man of common sense and common honesty would bind himself in the manner above-mentioned, nor, in fact, does the tenor of the will require it. According to its legal and proper construction it really *expresses* no more than is always *implied* in the terms of settlement of a minister. It not only implies but expresses the right of the parish to dissolve the connexion with their pastor, if he at any future time should embrace or

Rev. Peter Thacher, first pastor of the church in Milton. For further particulars in reference to his ancestors, see Allen's Biographical Dictionary and "Biographical Sketches of the Thacher family," in the New England Magazine. At the interment of Mr. Thacher, a discourse was delivered by Rev. Mr. Palmer of Needham, in an appendix to which may be found a complete list of Mr. Thacher's published works. On the monument referred to is an inscription in Latin and English. The English is thus expressed:—

Sacred to the memory
of the
REV. THOMAS THACHER,
a man of learning,
distinguished for strength
of mind
and energy of expression.
A minister of the gospel
assiduous and faithful.
How strongly attached
to his friends, and
how charitable to the poor,
while he lived,
will long be gratefully
remembered.
He died Oct. 19th, 1812,
in the 56th year of his age and
33d of his ministry.

preach and propagate the sentiments contained in the Calvinistic or Hopkinsian creed. And while the parish, in conformity with the provisions of the will, expressly reserved to themselves this right in the settlement of Mr. Thacher's successor, he was and is left unpledged and entirely free to embrace and preach and disseminate whatever doctrines appear to be inculcated in the Holy Scriptures.

We have now come down to the time of the present incumbent, who was ordained your pastor April 20th, 1814.* It becomes me not to speak of the manner, in which the duties of the pastoral office have been discharged since that time. But, I may be permitted to say, that I look back with satisfaction upon the interval, which has elapsed since the commencement of my ministry in this place, as nearly twenty-two years have passed without any serious interruption of our harmony. I rejoice, that this period has been marked by general prosperity, that no desolating scourge has been sent upon us, that, although several valued friends have gone to the grave, so many of our number still survive to behold the light of this day, to be present on this interesting occasion, to speak of the mercies of God in his temple, to utter the memory of his goodness in extending his care to this society amidst all the changes, vicissitudes and trials, which one hundred years have brought with them, and not permitting it to fall into any fatal snare, while many are extinct or have been severely tried, and support but a lingering existence, through the withering influence of party strife. We have for many years proceeded quietly indeed, without much noise, tumult or parade, yet, we hope, not without edification and improvement. From time to time acces-

* Eighteen churches were invited to assist in the ordination, by their pastors and delegates. Rev. Dr. Ware of Cambridge, offered the introductory prayer. Rev. Dr. Ripley of Concord preached a sermon. Rev. Dr. Kirkland, President of Harvard University, offered the ordaining prayer. Rev. Mr. Morey of Walpole, gave the charge. Rev. Mr. Bates of Dedham, presented the right hand of fellowship, and the Rev. Mr. Thacher of Boston, made the concluding prayer.

sions have been made to the parish,† nor in the knowledge of the speaker is there any unusually discouraging prospect in regard to the future. Let us then thank the God of our fathers and our God for blessings received, while we lift up our voices in sincere supplication for blessings in time to come.

In this connexion I am reminded of benefactors beside your former pastor, by whose aid the church has been provided with furniture for the Lord's table, a school has been supported a few weeks in a year, and the parish has been endowed with funds, whose income essentially diminishes the burden of taxation for the support of public worship. Some of those benefactors yet survive, whose kindness is not forgotten. Others, whom we hold in grateful remembrance, are numbered with the dead. It will not, I presume, be thought invidious, if, in addition to my remarks upon the character of Rev. Mr. Thacher, I offer a passing tribute to the memory of the late Dr. Joshua Fisher of Beverly, another distinguished benefactor, who deceased on the 14th March, 1833. He was a native of this place, born May 17th, 1748, the son of Nathanael and Elizabeth Fisher. Educated at Harvard University, he received the honors of that institution in the year 1766. He was admitted a member of this church in 1811. He was appointed occasionally to fill high political stations. His science and practical skill, as a physician, were long and extensively known and gave him rank among the most distinguished of his profession. Of the Massachusetts Medical Society he was many years the presiding officer. My acquaintance with him, which commenced with my ministry here, gave me frequent opportunities to witness his strong attachment to the place of his nativity. His interest in its wel-

† For the ancient parish limits consult parish records. By a late amendment of the third article of the Constitution of this Commonwealth and corresponding laws, parish lines are virtually obliterated.

are never abated. It was for a long time his fixed purpose to appropriate a portion of his wealth to the maintenance of the gospel ministry in this place. This purpose he accomplished. We owe him our gratitude, and have reason to cherish the remembrance of him, as one, whose religion was practical, in whose character the love of truth formed a distinguishing trait, who, having formed his opinions with deliberation, maintained them with unwavering stedfastness, always giving evidence of integrity not to be impeached, of firmness of resolution not to be shaken. If we have not wealth, like his, to distribute for their advancement, let us by our lives, honor learning, humanity, religion.*

I am prompted no less by personal feeling, than by the demands of the occasion, to acknowledge the liberality of a society, which has been assisted by the liberality of its friends. Your contributions in aid of the Sunday school and its library, the assistance you have afforded to various religious and theological institutions, the readiness, with which you have opened the hand of charity for the relief of sufferers by fire, and the benevolence of a female society, to whose exertions many of the indigent and the feeble are indebted for their present comfort, all at the same time bear testimony to your christian sympathy. I would not utter flattering

* *Property of the church and parish.*—The *church* is indebted to Mrs. Margaret Dewing for a legacy of $100, which was appropriated to the purchase of plate ; to Dea. John Richards for a silver cup and two flagons, to Miss Sarah Richards and Miss Sarah Baker for two silver dishes for the communion service.—

The baptismal font was a gift of several individuals, for the use of the Society.—

The *parish* is indebted to Miss Susanna Bredinno for $100, the income of which is to be applied to the support of a school in or near the meeting house, and to Miss Mary Gay for 100 dollars, which sum is added to the fund.

By the last will of their pastor, the late Rev. Thomas Thacher, the parish came into possession of his farm containing about 20 acres and of personal estate to the amount of 365 dollars. During his life he aided the parish in the purchase of woodland, and contributed to the "fund" for the support of the gospel ministry in this place.

The amount of the bequest of the Hon. Joshua Fisher is 3000 dollars, now included in the fund just mentioned.—He also gave to the parish the bell now in use. There are six acres of pasture and twenty acres of wood-land belonging to the parish. The "fund" raised by subscription is about 2000 dollars. The whole of the fund in money is equal to $5252 82.

words, nor intimate, that any more has been done, than it is a duty to do. But it gives pleasure to call to mind past tokens of christian kindness and philanthropy ; nor will I dismiss this topic without a grateful acknowledgement of personal benefits.

Though this religious society is in a condition externally prosperous, it cannot boast of a multitude of members. The number of families is 82. There are 113 names in the list of rateable polls. As there are no records, kept by Mr. Dwight, the first minister, now to be found, and those of his successor are mutilated and very imperfect, I am not able to give an account of the baptisms, admissions to church, marriages and deaths during their ministry.

From the records of my immediate predecessor and my own it appears that there have been 293 baptisms from the time of his settlement to the present day. During his connexion with the parish 84 persons were admitted members of the church. Since 1814, the year in which my ministry commenced, 40 have been added to the number of communicants.—A growing neglect of the ordinance of the Lord's supper is to be regretted.

There have been six Deacons in the church since it was organized. The first two have been mentioned. They were succeeded by Dea. Ichabod Gay, who died Dec 14th 1814, at the advanced age of 91 years, and Dea. Ichabod Ellis, who died Jan. 14th 1811, in the 69th year of his age, faithful, upright, exemplary and honorable men, whose characters had I ability and time, I should take pleasure in delineating. The two respected individuals, who now officiate, Deacons John Richards and George Ellis, were elected June 7th 1810.

On the records of Mr. Thacher are noted 142 marriages. On my own the number is 91.—The number of births since 1814, for an account of which I am indebted to our physician, is 302.

That this portion of the town is favored with a healthful atmosphere, will appear from the annual bills of mortality, which exhibit but few in proportion to the number of inhabitants, and among those few, a comparatively large number, who arrived at an advanced age. In the record of deceased members of the society kept by my predecessor there are the names of 211 individuals. Estimating the average, it appears to be equal to about 6 in a year. From the year 1814, April 20th, to the present time 111 instances of mortality have occurred within the same limits,—the average number being about 5 in a year. The greatest number recorded in any single year is 11, the smallest is 2. It is also deserving of notice, that from Nov. 4th 1819 to Nov. 15th 1820, not an individual of the society was removed by death. The longevity of the inhabitants in this place is remarkable. Among 322, who have died in the course of the last 54 years, *two* lived more than a century, *eight* at the time of their decease were between 90 and 100, *thirty-six* between 80 and 90, and *thirty* between 70 and 80 years of age. The result shows that 1 in 161 lived 100 years, 1 in 32, passed beyond the bounds of 90, 1 in 7, reached the age of 80, and 1 in about 4, the age of 70 years. While noticing these facts in regard to age, it may gratify curiosity to state, that there are now within the territorial limits of the parish, if I am correctly informed, 1 more than 90, 13 between 80 and 90, and 14 between 70 and 80 years of age. The first person, it is said, buried in yonder grave yard, was Mr. John Buckmaster, who deceased Jan. 12th, 1752. One person now living in the parish, I believe, was born previously to the ordination of Mr. Tyler.

In thus recurring to the past and contemplating the present, how many thoughts crowd themselves into the mind! I feel, that I am speaking not to a new race, the first who have occupied these hills

and plains, but the descendants of men, who long ago exerted their strength in subduing this rugged but fruitful soil, who encountered the perils of what was then a wilderness, but may now be said to "blossom as the rose;" men of independent views, possessing resolution and courage; whose characters, if they were somewhat stern and harsh, exhibit the features of the age, in which they lived. You worship near the spot, where your kindred of several past generations, paid their homage to the most High God. You cultivate the soil, whence your fathers derived their subsistence by the "sweat of the brow," you tread upon ground, where they trod. Your flocks and herds graze in the fields, where they pitched their tents. You draw water from the same fountains, which supplied your progenitors with a pure beverage, to quench their thirst and cause the blood to flow through their veins in healthful streams; whose simple fare would now be thought hardly sufficient to carry us through labors less severe, while they sustained the toils incident to a new settlement. You claim relationship to those, in whose dwellings the loom occupied a conspicuous station, who were clothed in their own fabrics, who were unacquainted with the foreign luxuries, that are spread upon our tables, and the foreign manufactures, which adorn our persons. Much, I may say, is due to the first tenants of these grounds, of whose hardships we cannot easily form an adequate conception, whose trials we know not by experience,—trials which may suggest to our minds the inquiry, whether similar ones would be endured by us with an equal degree of fortitude.

In the course of my researches into the history of the parish, I have been reminded of the use and importance of family records, and written notices of passing events. A knowledge of circumstances, that now seem to be of little moment, or are so fa-

miliar to *us*, that we imagine they will be equally familiar, even to another generation, may at some future time materially affect the solution of most interesting questions as to property. Besides, we take pleasure in tracing the occurrences of a future age; we love to bring before us those, from whom we derived our descent. By a little attention to this point, each one may become in a measure the historian of his own times. Every one indeed in our republican land must principally rely upon his own merits. We have no heraldry or escutcheons to blazon forth the deeds and character of our ancestors. Rank is not determined by that of our progenitors. Each individual is to be esteemed according to his personal accomplishments and deserts. Each must be in a great degree, under providence, the maker of his own fortune and of his fame, and rise or fall as he acts, or fails to act an useful, honorable and virtuous part. But although we neither claim any merit on account of the virtuous dispositions of our ancestors, nor deserve blame or disgrace for their errors and faults, yet it is not useless, but rather productive of good to retain mementos of our predecessors.

We might devote a portion of time to a consideration of the changes which have taken place in customs and manners during the last century. But it would require too long a chapter. Under this head I would just observe, that the families in this place being very extensively connected by intermarriages, this circumstance has produced a similarity of manners and a familiar mode of address, which prevails, perhaps, in few places in an equal degree. This also may have caused less frequent and less obvious changes in the state of society, than might otherwise have been effected.

And now, my friends, permit me to suggest the necessity of a high standard of education. For, although we have no reason to say, "the former

days were better than these," but on the contrary claim superiority as respects our literary privileges and attainments, yet we have not gone on to perfection. It is true, the psalter and the primer and the spelling book are now not the only funds, whence the pupils of our common schools derive their knowledge. Nor is a district-school education thought complete, as in the days of our grandparents, when those classics had become familiar, or when the best male scholars could cipher as far, as the 'Rule of Three,' and write a legible hand, the other sex not being considered essentially deficient, even if they could not write their names. We notice with pleasure that instead of six weeks, which in the early days of this settlement, was the longest term allowed to a majority of the youth, two thirds of a year are devoted to common-school instruction.* Teachers are *generally* better qualified for the duties of their station, than in former times. As the age has advanced *they* have advanced. But the work of reformation and improvement is not yet complete. I would speak of the benefit of extending the term of instruction in school, beyond that period, when a few dollars may be earned by domestic manufactures, or by manual labor abroad, and of the disadvantages of forsaking a seminary at that age, when the value of knowledge may be most justly appreciated, and this treasure be most rapidly acquired. The elements of knowledge may be more deeply fixed under the discipline of a school continued to the sixteenth or seventeenth year of one's age, than if this discipline ceases before a youth has arrived at that period, when habits of mental application may be much more firmly rooted and the extent and value of his privileges

* A school was formerly kept near the house of Mr. John Richards, about six weeks at a time, and under the control of the selectmen. See record of 1728. At one period the only school house in the parish was near the present situation of the Baptist meeting-house. There are now three school districts in the parish. This year the town granted three thousand dollars for the support of district schools.

may be more fully comprehended. It is also most desirable that a moral influence be exerted over the minds of the young, that none should ever be introduced into the nurseries of our youth, who will not teach them to observe the laws of nature and the precepts of revelation, to avoid all evil, and revere God and truth above every thing else. While the intellectual powers are brought into exercise, let moral principle be inculcated and strengthened. The system of education is likewise more complete, when carried into the family, as well as maintained in the school. Parents and guardians may unite their efforts with those of the professed teacher. By the mutual influence of domestic culture and discipline, and of instruction at school the pupil will be prevented from forgetting to practice in one situation the lessons received in the other. There is not one of us, I believe, who would willingly be thrown back one hundred or even fifty years, as respects opportunities for moral and intellectual cultivation. We can have no wish for the restoration of an age that has passed away. It will appear equally undesirable to stop the march of improvement. The watchword of our fathers was 'forward.' It shall be ours. The field, which they have left us to occupy we will strive to make fruitful even to an hundred fold. Of those, who have received a public education, the number is small. No one of this parish since the year 1810 has been educated at a College or University. From the time of our incorporation to 1810, *eight**

* Rev. Ebenezer Gay, D. D. who was born May 4th, 1718, a son of Lusher and Mary Gay. He was graduated at Harvard University in 1737, and ordained pastor of the first church and society in Suffield, Conn. in January 1742. He died in the 54th year of his ministry and the 78th year of his age. A sermon was delivered at his funeral by Rev. Dr. Lathrop of West Springfield, in which he is spoken of as an "able and learned divine."

Rev. Samuel Kingsbury, son of Ebenezer and Abigail Kingsbury, born Dec. 17th, 1736, was graduated at Harvard University 1759, settled as a minister of the gospel in Edgarton, Martha's Vineyard. He died about the year 1778.

Rev. Bunker Gay, a brother of Rev. Dr. Gay, was born July 31st, 1735, graduated at Harvard University 1760, ordained pastor of the church and so-

have received the honors of Harvard University, who were natives of this place. One only survives. I would not advocate sending a dunce to College, nor urge any one, who with an active mind has no taste for literary pursuits to seclude himself within the walls of a University. Perhaps there are now as many to go forth into the world with the title A. B. affixed to their names, or to engage in the learned professions, as the good of society demands. Yet I have thought, that within the bounds of every society, the effect is beneficial, if a certain proportion of its members enjoy the privilege of instruction in a public seminary, inasmuch, as a more generally correct taste may thus be produced, more just views be entertained of the value of knowledge, and the subject of education be better understood.

As the members of society are pursuing various occupations it becomes necessary to cultivate mutual confidence and mutual sympathy. There is

ciety in Hinsdale. Died at the age of 80. He published a discourse delivered on the day of the annual Thanksgiving in 1793, a large portion of which was in verse. The following extract may not be uninteresting, as a specimen—

"Our equal government and laws,
Thro' the wide world gain vast applause ;
In almost every foreign nation
These are preach'd up for imitation.

Our guilt, my friends, must be prodigious,
If freedom civil and religious
And all the blessings it imparts
Make no impression on our hearts."

Hon Joshua Fisher A. A. and M. M. S. See discourse.

Dr Philip Draper, son of Timothy and Hannah Draper, born March 2d, 1757 graduated at H. U. 1780, practised as a physician in South Dedham. Died March 21st 1817.

Rev Ichabod Draper, brother of the preceding born Aug 24th 1755, graduated at Harvard University 1783, ordained Feb. 1786, over a congregational society in Amherst.

Hon Caleb Ellis, son of Enoch and Julitta Ellis, was born April 16th, 1767, and died May 9th 1816. He was graduated at H. University in the year 1793. He established himself in the profession of law at Claremont, N. H. in 1800 and sustained in the course of his life several important offices. He was elected Representative to Congress, also appointed to the offices of Representative, Senator and Counsellor in the government of N. H. In 1813 he entered upon the duties of a Justice in the Supreme Judicial Court of New Hampshire. These stations he filled with honor.

George Gay Esq. son of the late Willard Gay Esq. was graduated at H. U. in 1810 and now resides in Boston, engaged in the profession of law.

at the present day, and perhaps there always has been in great, and even in small communities, a tendency to mutual distrust, to suspicion and jealousy in the minds of one class, as regards the views and objects and motives of another class, as if all were not in fact interested in the common welfare, as if one portion of society might expect to thrive without the other, or take undue advantages, and yet preserve the social system in a sound state. I do not speak of this, as characteristic of ourselves. It is a *tendency*, of which I speak;—a tendency which needs to be watched and counteracted. I trust we shall ever consider, that we have a common interest, that it is not for the good of the rich to separate themselves from the poor, nor of the poor to separate themselves from the rich, nor of those of one profession, trade or occupation, to set themselves in opposition to another. We shall each of us labor for the common good, and, though acting in different spheres, act for one great and good end; duly vigilant indeed, lest one encroach upon another's rights, but not needlessly suspicious and distrustful of any, who do not labor in the same vocation with ourselves. Knowing on what our success and our felicity depend, we shall feel as brethren, we shall act as brethren, cherish an enlarged and philanthropic spirit, and cling to those institutions and means of improvement in virtue and knowledge, to which we must ever be indebted for the best of our blessings. We cannot all be engaged in the same pursuit; we cannot all be farmers, mechanics, nor clergymen, nor physicians, but we can strive to assist and encourage each other, believing that each needs the other's aid.

As a means of promoting this end, let us cultivate the *social* faculties. The influence of society in forming the manners, the mind and the heart, is not easily estimated. It depends on the character of the society, in which we move, whether this in-

fluence be good or bad, salutary or prejudicial.—We look upon the social circle where virtue predominates, as a place fitted to nourish good affections and elevate the tone of moral feeling. We view relaxation from the toils of the day, in the company of both sexes, free from the extravagance and excess of ceremony and from the folly of dissipation, as good in its tendency. It is not in the field or work-shop, or on the high-way, nor yet in places of resort, where a female would not be seen, that any should expect to receive his highest gratification. We should not consider *that* to be the purest pleasure, of which we are capable, which results from ceaseless labor to accumulate earthly treasures. By the social fireside some of the best faculties of our nature are called into exercise, and improved. He, who advances to manhood with no associates except those of his own sex, must fail to possess much of that refinement of feeling, of which the heart is susceptible, besides incurring a greater hazard of indulging himself in forbidden joys. We would commend a disposition occasionally to throw off the burden of care, which is apt to accumulate in the busy occupations of the world, for the sake of cultivating those qualities of mind and heart, which thrive most vigorously in the seasons of social intercourse, free from ceremony, and the tyranny of fashionable life.

I ask your patience, while in conclusion I offer a few observations upon the importance of a high standard of religion, of elevated and just views of its true nature and indispensable requisitions. Practical religion, discovering itself in 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' in true devotion and in universal good will, is of the highest moment. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." We hope it is becoming more thoroughly understood, that the essence of true religion is love, and the more deeply this sentiment penetrates the human heart, the less ill a

difference of speculative views engender strife and feed the fires of jealousy. Are you in affliction? You need its consolations, you want that hope and trust in God, which it inspires, that faith which it enjoins,—a faith enabling you to discern beyond the overshadowing cloud, the bright shining of the sun,—faith, which persuades you never to despair, even though the dispensations of Providence are more and more dark, and his designs, as you proceed, are enveloped in deeper obscurity. Are you in prosperity? You still need this handmaid, this guide, this monitor. You require its solemn admonitions to warn you of the fatal snares, which prosperity often spreads in the path of mortals. It may be treated with indifference, it may seem an unnecessary companion through the journey of life, but can it be so entirely banished from the confines of the human breast, as never to suggest its truths nor cause itself to be respected? Is not the secret whisper of conscience, 'Be religious?'

Vague impressions of a religious complexion are not sufficient. That there may be a high standard of religion, all other considerations, motives, principles, should yield to its demands, so that no worldly policy, no love of applause, no fear of man, no regard for mere momentary interests, may turn us aside from the path of life and everlasting peace. Then only, as I conceive, is our view of the obligations of religion just, when we carry it with us into all the relations of life. Do we imagine that only a diligent and frequent use of *means*, will fulfil its purposes? When we adopt as severe and exclusive a creed, as the ingenuity of man has ever devised, do we suppose that our standard of religion is high and correct? We are deceived. After all this, religion may sit loosely, and exert but a feeble influence. It must be a deeply seated and abiding principle, ere it will work out our salvation.

It is an age of innovation, as well as of improvement. It is an age of free inquiry. It is an age, I must say, of infidelity. Hence the youthful mind is in danger of being led astray. A temptation may arise to seek deliverance from what is sometimes called ignominious bondage. But believe, that you can enjoy perfect freedom, only when you are free from the chains of sin. Be assured, that the only true liberty is the liberty of the children of God. Stand erect amidst all the moral dangers, which threaten you. In the exercise of christian meekness present a bold front against all, who by insinuation or open attack, would destroy the hopes, or take away the consolations and joys of the religion of Jesus. Come to the altar of God and his Son, and let the sacramental table, as well as the house of worship, bear witness to the fervency of your prayers, to the sincerity of your devotions; and, as one after another of those, who have offered their vows, as disciples of Jesus, passes away from the scenes of time, permit not the ordinances and institutions of Christianity to be neglected. My friends, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. Associated in the common concerns of life, for the sake of rendering a temporary abode on earth more desirable, be associated, likewise, as worshippers of the God and Father of all in adoration, prayer and praise, and in anticipation of purer worship, and purer pleasures in heaven.

This is due to those, who have been worshippers, where you now are acting your parts on the stage of life, who passed through many trials to secure the privileges, of which you are partakers. It is due to those, who sleep in the dust, whose memories you cherish with affection and respect, with whose names are associated the most hallowed filial sentiments, and recollections. Could they look upon the generations now living, especially upon that generation now rising up to fill the place of

their elders, would they not rejoice with holy joy in view of their posterity, doing even more, than they did, for the cause of God, of truth, of the best interests of man ?

More than this, it is due to those, who will live when we are dead. We seek the welfare of our children and our children's children. Let us then value and abide by those principles, which are founded on eternal truth. Let us come with our families to the altar of God, as each day of the Lord returns, and pay our vows in his temple, never permitting the cares and employments of the week so far to intrude upon holy time, as to keep or drive us away from the doors of the sanctuary. We shall soon follow the generations, that have gone before us, and be gathered to our fathers. The founders of this society and most of their immediate successors slumber in the grave. At the close of another century, who will be actors in the busy scenes of the world we cannot tell. We know that our voices will be hushed—it is morally certain that these tabernacles of flesh will be mingled with the dust. And what better inheritance can we leave to our succesors, than that of good instructions exemplified by virtuous lives ? What higher satisfaction can we enjoy than that, derived from a reflection, that we have been faithful in our endeavors to lay a foundation for the security and happiness of generations yet unborn—that we have inculcated sentiments, to which the good of every age will most cheerfully respond, and to which our own hearts naturally bear testimony, as having their origin in the fountain of light, of holiness and love. Let us keep in view and cherish in our hearts the spirit of that covenant, by which the earliest members of this church bound themselves to God and to one another, beseeching the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to bless us and ours to the latest posterity.

Here follows the Covenant of the Church, with the signatures of its original members.

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, apprehending ourselves called of God into a sacred fellowship with one another in the profession and practice of the holy Christian Religion, as a particular church of the Lord Jesus Christ do solemnly covenant with God and one another, as follows: In the first place, we avouch the Lord this day to be our God, yielding ourselves to him to be his servants, and choosing him to be our portion forever. We give up ourselves to the God whose name alone is Jehovah and is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be his people, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice, declaring our firm assent to the truths and hearty consent to the tenor of the Gospel. We accept of Jesus Christ in all his glorious offices, Prophetical, Priestly and Kingly—and depend on him in the way, which he hath prescribed for instruction, Pardon and Eternal life. We profess our serious resolution to deny, as the grace of God teaches, all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and piously in the present evil world, to endeavor that our conversation may be, as becomes and adorns the Gospel. We promise, by the help of God's grace, to walk together in all the ways of holy communion, as becomes children in the family of Christ: charitably to support and conscientiously to attend the public worship of God in all the instituted duties thereof, and to submit to the discipline of his kingdom, to watch over one another with Christian circumspection, and endeavor our mutual edification and comfort. *Furthermore*, we dedicate our offspring with ourselves to the Lord, engaging to bring them up in His nurture and admonition, and as far as in us lies transmit the ordinances of God pure and entire to them.

ALL THIS we do in the presence and fear of God, with a deep sense of our own unworthiness to be admitted into covenant with him and to enjoy the privileges of the evangelical Church State, and our own insufficiency to perform the duties of it. And do therefore rely on, and pray to the *God of Grace and Peace*, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that, which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

This covenant was signed by the following names, but is without date.

JOSIAH DWIGHT,
THOMAS HERRING,
DANIEL FISHER,
JOHN GAY,
NATHANIEL GAY,
LUSHER GAY,
JONATHAN ONION,
JOSEPH ELLIS,
JOHN BRACKETT,
JOSEPH ELLIS, 2nd.
JOHN BAKER,
JOHN RICHARDS,
BENJAMIN FAIRBANKS.

ORIGINAL HYMN,

SUNG ON THE OCCASION.

To thee, O God! we now would raise
A sacred song of grateful praise;
Thee, whom our fathers worshipped here,
We worship now with holy fear.

The pledge they offered, holy, true,
We at thine altar would renew;
With hearts united, in thy house
This day repeat the solemn vows.

This vine thou plantedst by thy care;
Long may it flourish, strong and fair,
Its fruits appear, its shades extend,
Till days and years and time shall end.

Our Father, God, whose care we own,
Our children with thy favor crown;
When thou shalt take us to thy rest,